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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Washington 25, D. C.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Office of the Director



1 Mar. 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Fifth Report to the President by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, dated 11 December 1959. (Recommendation Regarding "National Intelligence Priorities")

1. The subject recommendation reads as follows:

"It is recommended that a realistic appraisal of our priority national intelligence objectives be undertaken on an urgent basis; and that the Intelligence Community's emphasis on collection objectives be re-directed to insure that primary emphasis and support are given by the entire Community to the fulfillment of our most critical national intelligence collection programs, as distinguished from fulfillment of departmental intelligence requirements of lesser importance to the national security."

2. The text preceding this recommendation indicates that the Board of Consultants was particularly concerned with our lack of success, to date, in discovering the operational characteristics and deployment of Soviet ballistic missile units, and that the Board attributes this lack of success to two factors:

a. "a tendency on the part of certain elements of the Community to place undue emphasis on fulfilling departmental rather than national intelligence requirements"; and

b. "the approach presently taken to the matter of establishing and implementing the most meaningful national intelligence priorities."

3. All members of the Intelligence Community are deeply concerned regarding our inability, to date, to identify and describe Soviet operational ballistic missile units. No member of the Intelligence Community would subordinate the solution of this urgent problem to the pursuit of a parochial interest. Insofar as the Priority National Intelligence Objectives are concerned, this subject has been a matter of First Priority since the present PNIO series was instituted in 1954.

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Our partial lack of success, to date, is attributable, not to want of priority in the direction of our effort, but to the inherent difficulties of the problem and to the fact that, due to the risks involved, we have been permitted to use only sparingly the most promising (certainly the most effective) source of hard intelligence on this subject. An intensive research and analysis effort has been undertaken in order to define the limits of the coverage required for this purpose and so to enhance the chances of achieving a breakthrough by this means. We remain hopeful of achieving this at the earliest date which the nature of the problem and of the resources at our disposal will allow. Some progress has been made since the date of the Board's report. We shall exert every effort to improve this situation.

4. The latest revision of the Priority National Intelligence Objectives was adopted as recently as 15 December 1959. It is subject to continuing review.

5. The PNIOs prepared pursuant to NSCID-1 are a statement of the most critical substantive problems currently confronting the Intelligence Community, for the guidance of intelligence research as well as of intelligence collection. These however are of necessity in rather general terms and must be developed by more specific collection guides. The derivation of specific collection requirements from these stated objectives requires analysis by research personnel to determine the elements of information essential to a solution of the problem, the elements already available or readily accessible through research, the additional information obtainable through routine collection, and the additional information of such importance as to warrant a priority collection effort. After such priority collection requirements have been conveyed to collection agencies, there still remain administrative determinations to be made regarding the suitability of a given means of collection to the task and the proper allocation of limited resources.

6. The proper allocation of collection resources to particular tasks is a continuing problem requiring constant review, adjustment, and forward planning. For special reasons, this is especially true of the intelligence collection resources represented by the National Security Agency. A study of the proper allocation of NSA resources in relation to the many requirements levied upon them is now in progress.

7. On the understanding outlined above as regards the continuing review of our National Intelligence Priorities, the particular action being taken as regards priorities for NSA and finally the urgent and coordinated action being taken as regards possible Soviet missile bases as described above, I recommend that the President defer action on the subject recommendation, pending a further report on this subject which we will make to your Board of Consultants at its next meeting.

SIGNED

ALLEN W. DULLES  
Director